

Chronology of FNLC Invasion Planning

--According to [redacted] debriefed after the March 1977 invasion, the rebels presumed a conventional strike launched into Shaba from Angola would succeed because the Zairian army would not fight and Mobutu could not garner sufficient international support to repel the invaders. The plan was to send an initial column of 1,000 rebels armed with rifles, grenades, and mortars, down the Benguela Railroad into Shaba. As soon as Mutshashi and Kolwezi were captured, Angolan troops with heavy equipment including tanks, armored vehicles, rockets were supposed to reinforce the rebels. The FNLC soon became demoralized, however, when it appeared the Angolans would not support them, Zairian planes attacked them, and Moroccan troops were committed to the battle.

[redacted] source reported that the Cubans were providing sophisticated training, weapons, and transport so that a second attack could be quick and decisive.

--In late August, [redacted] reported that 4,000 to 6,000 FNLC insurgents were being taught guerrilla tactics by experienced Katangan officers and that once this training was completed they would receive special instruction from Angolan, Cuban, and Soviet advisers. According to this source, the FNLC concluded by June that last year's invasion failed because conventional tactics were used. He said the insurgents had decided to rely much more heavily on guerrilla operations in the hope of provoking a popular uprising. A major effort would be made to organize popular support around Sandoa and among the urban poor in Lubumbashi.

--In early August, [redacted] reported that the FNLC was planning to outflank Zairian forces in Western Shaba by crossing northern Zambia with trucks and artillery to strike directly at Lubumbashi. The FNLC leaders said they would launch the attack as soon as permission was obtained from the Zambians to transit their territory. [redacted]

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[redacted] said the rebels were counting on help from colleagues already in place in Lubumbashi. They hoped that the capture of Lubumbashi would so demoralize the Zairian soldiers that resistance in other parts of Shaba would quickly collapse.

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--In August [redacted]

[redacted] said Cubans were providing guerrilla type training for the Katangans near Cazombo.

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--In October, [redacted] reported that FNLC plans to invade Zaire had been delayed for several months because of Angolan refusal to directly support another invasion, harrassment from UNITA guerrillas, shortages, low morale, and general confusion.

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--In mid-October, [redacted]

[redacted] he expected a FNLC attack into Zaire in mid-December. The attack was to be launched from Caianda directly into Zaire and from Cazombo and Calunda northeast into Zaire, presumably through Zambia. The infiltration of troops had already begun.

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--In November, [redacted]

[redacted] said the FNLC would not hazard an second invasion-like attack into Zaire without a major overt Angolan commitment. As this was unlikely, he expected a major infiltration of guerrillas who would begin a more classic guerrilla struggle.

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--In early March 1978 a [redacted] of

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[redacted] reported that the FNLC was planning a full-scale invasion of Zaire with the full participation of Cuban military units in the next two or three months. Plans which were in the final stages of preparation--focused on achieving quick military victory before the US, France, or other Western powers could respond.

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--In early May [redacted]

[redacted] said the Cubans and the Soviets were not seeking the overthrow of Mobutu but to initiate a long revolutionary struggle in Zaire from which a new leader can emerge. He said they wanted to create a "secure area" from which to export revolution to Rhodesia and South Africa.

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--On 4 or 5 May, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] was planning in the near future" to infiltrate a large number of rebels from Angola to Zaire through Zambian territory. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the Cubans were already organizing the movement of a large number of FNLC troops from northeastern Angola toward the Zambian border and that Cuban advisers were accompanying this force. They had no confirmation the Cubans planned to stay with the rebels once they left Angola.

--A [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] that half of the 2,000 rebels involved in the attack on Kolwezi had infiltrated into the city during the previous six months. They said large amounts of arms and equipment were cached in and near Kolwezi prior to the attack and that 1,500 rebels had been involved in the fighting elsewhere. They said that two Cuban and four Angolan advisers accompanied the rebels as they started to move out of their camps in Angola.

--According to [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the Zambians this week have disarmed and detained about 100 FNLC guerrillas who were attempting to return to Angola via Zambia. The few that have cooperated with Zambian interrogators have stated that the Kolwezi invasion was but the first phase of a "many-layered" plan of attacks throughout the Shaba region. Hundreds of armed guerrillas now in place in Shaba are preparing soon to attack other towns, including Likasi, Lubumbashi, and Kipushi. The guerrillas are supported by secret bases and supply centers throughout the region. The aim of the rebels was to terminate once and for all the Mobutu's oppression of the Luanda people.